

MEN@MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

March 25, 2020

God's Grace for Enduring Hardships

2 Timothy 2:1-3

Paul begins this chapter by telling Timothy to be strong in the grace that is “in” Christ Jesus. For each of us as well, the strength to face the challenges of this life is found in Christ Jesus. Paul points specifically to the grace that is found in Christ. This place of strength called “grace” is a place that many define as “unmerited favor.” Although it is that; more defined, it is a place of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness and self-control which equips us with strength for any challenge that comes our way. As we stand in the fortress of God’s grace, the power of the Holy Spirit flows to us and through us.

In the current trials you now face, what characteristics of grace do you see flowing into your life, or what characteristics of God’s grace do you need to meet the current challenges?

Currently, we face the trial of a virus in the nation where many people are afraid and worried about what might happen. Each of us can find ourselves uneasy during the times of disruption. As followers of Christ, let our walk with him not be disrupted. Let us see him at work in the midst of the storm, and seize the moment to join him in the strength of his grace flowing through us to a world seeking hope.

In verse 3, Paul goes on to instruct Timothy to endure hardship like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Continuing in his theme of standing strong in the grace found in Christ, Paul uses the analogy of the life of a soldier. In the midst of hardship, trials and tribulation, we are encouraged not only to stand in grace, we are to do it like a soldier.

When I think of a soldier I think of one who has given up his personal rights to serve under the command of another. He has been trained and is prepared for battle, but he also knows he will incur sacrifice and face hardships from every side. In light of this reality he is dressed, ready, and has the right attitude.

An attitude is a mind prepared for action. Specifically for this reference, the mind is prepared for action in the midst of hardship. It is a mind that knows that hardship is likely to come and is ready to take a stand to face the challenge with courage and strength.

Lately in the news we have heard much talk about being at war against a virus. To be called to war is a call to be diligent like a soldier who is facing a great battle. At the same time that we

face a physical enemy, we also face a spiritual enemy who may seek to take advantage of the frailty of our flesh.

Paul addresses this battle in Ephesians 6:10-18. He speaks of an enemy that is scheming against us. In the midst of the battle, Paul calls for us to be strong in the Lord and his mighty power. In the midst of physical battles, we could be tempted to turn away from the grace of our Lord and succumb to the weakness of the flesh, becoming preoccupied and even overwhelmed with the cares of this world. We may become so concerned with the physical, thereby forgetting the power that comes from standing firm in the teachings and promises of our Lord and savior.

Paul instructs us, like a good soldier, to put on the armor of God, so when the battle comes we will be able to stand our ground in the Lord. Our ultimate weapons are not of the flesh, they are the weapons of truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God and prayer. As the storms of this life come against us, let us continue to take our stand in the Lord to be a bright star to those who are desperate for some glimmer of hope. We serve a risen savior, the only hope for a fearful and dying world.

What piece of the armor of God do you need to shore up in order to face your current challenges?

What do you need to pray in order to bring yourself more in line with God's mind in your time of hardship?

Who does God want you to help during this time of hardship? I find it helpful to help people who are facing difficulties similar to mine. For example, if you are discouraged –find ways to encourage others. All things are possible in him who gives us strength.

Blessings in Christ dear friends,

Larry Roach